

# **ACUTE SUICIDE RISK**

### RED FLAGS OR Direct indices

- SUICIDAL IDEATION
  - Passive thoughts about wanting to be dead
  - Active thoughts about suicide
- SUICIDAL COMMUNICATION
  - Indirect "I won't be around much longer"
  - Active "I want to kill myself"
- SUICIDAL PLAN, PREPARATION, REHEARSAL
  - Specific time and/or method, acquiring means, writing suicide notes
- SUICIDAL INTENT
  - Belief that they will kill or hurt themselves

### ORANGE FLAGS OR INDIRECT INDICES

- Perceiving themselves as a BURDEN TO OTHERS
- Severe HOPELESSNESS and/or PESSIMISM
- LOSS OF PLEASURE in usual activities (Anhedonia)
- Increasing AGITATION, ANXIETY, or RESTLESSNESS
- COMMAND HALLUCINATIONS
  urging suicide
- Inability to CONCENTRATE or make DECISIONS
- SLEEPING too much or too little
- Increased, excessive, use of ALCOHOL or DRUGS
- Preoccupation with anticipated LOSS or STRESSOR
- Precautions against discovery, DECEPTION or CONCEALMENT.

### PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- HOPE for the future
- Sense of SELF-EFFICACY
- Attachment to BEING ALIVE
- Valued RESPONSIBILITY to family, friends, pets, etc...
- Protective SOCIAL NETWORKS
- ATTACHED TO THERAPIST
- FEAR OF DYING, pain, failed attempt, etc...
- Fear of SOCIAL DISAPPROVAL for suicide
- Belief that suicide is IMMORAL or will be PUNISHED in the after life
- Strong SPIRITUAL beliefs that don't approve of suicide

## IN A CRISIS

#### **Environment**

- \* Reduce access to lethal means
  - \* Change suicidal models
  - \* Increase social support
  - \* Remove or reduce stressful events or demands

#### **Behaviour**

\* Pay attention to affect rather than content

\* Generate hope and reasons for living

\* Activate behaviour

\* Block immediate maladaptive responses (e.g. yes, but statements)

#### **Problem Solve**

\* Focus on Current Problem

\* Empathically tell the patient not to attempt suicide or self harm

\* Give advice and make direct suggestions

\* Offer Solutions

\* Clarify and reinforce adaptive responses

#### **Reassess Suicide Risk**

Don't Assume: \* Suicide Ideation is gone \* Suicide risk won't come back

#### ASSESS RISK AT THE END OF INTERACTION

#### **Trouble Shoot**

\* Identify factors that will interfere immediately and longer term

\* Come up with a revised plan \* Ask "what if?"

\* Develop a back up plan

\* Schedule Check- in

#### **Get a Commitment**

\* Explicitly ask for a commitment
 \* Sell Action Plan
 \* Ask for a lot, take a little

\* Get a little, then ask for more!

\* Remind Person of Previous Commitments